

Testimony in support of HB 6800 Planning and development by Kathleen Miller, Simsbury Connecticut

AN ACT CONCERNING ELECTRONIC BOOK AND DIGITAL AUDIOBOOK LICENSING.

To prohibit publishers of electronic books and digital audiobooks from including certain restrictions in contracts or license agreements with libraries in the state.

Our libraries are a critical service and resource for all of our community members, but the high cost of digital resource licensing places an unfair burden on local taxpayers. It is unfair that libraries have to pay 4-6 times more than the general public for e-books and e-audio books. Additionally, the libraries pay these high prices simply to lease a single item which expires after 1-2 years. It is not sustainable for our library budgets and our taxpayers are not in position to increase the funding to the library to keep up with the exorbitant prices to maintain digital materials. Why should libraries have to pay more for electronic materials than for comparable print materials?

We want:

Publishers to make money.

Libraries to build robust digital collections.

Taxpayers not to be overcharged.

As a retired person on a fixed income, I rely on my local library for e-books and audio books. Often I have to request an e-audio book months in advance, since the wait time is usually several weeks to several months for popular titles. Libraries are not allowed to share digital copies with other libraries even though the libraries gladly share their other materials. Many homebound seniors rely on electronic materials. With the current unfair pricing structure, it is difficult to serve those patrons.

As a Trustee for my local library, I feel a duty to be budget conscious and not waste taxpayer funds. I would like to see the playing field be leveled for my local library and a fairer pricing process for acquisition of e-book and electronic materials.

Please support HB 6800 and our public libraries.